

ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY
Spring 2016

Tuesday

6:00 – 8:30 pm

BS/ES768 Jewish Christian Studies: Ten Commandments

Rabbi Dr. Avram Reisner and Dr. Rebecca Hancock

Course Description:

Among the explanation given to Pharaoh in the book of Exodus for the purpose of the Israelites' departure was to "celebrate a festival" to God in the wilderness (Ex. 5:1). That had, indeed, been God's promise to Moses: "when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain" (Ex. 3:12). What had not been disclosed is how God would put that encounter to use through God's self-revelation to the people as a whole. The product of that encounter was the Decalogue, which, for that reason, carries unusual significance for Biblical faiths.

In this course, we will look at the structure of the 10 Commandments as a whole, as well as each of the specific commandments. Throughout the course we will pay attention to both to the social-historical context out of which they arose, and the various ways that they have been received by both Jewish and Christian communities.

Course Requirements:

- Students should expect to read *at most* 1000 pages of required reading.
- Students should expect to write *at most* 27 double-spaced pages. These will be comprised of the following:
 1. 5-6 page paper (after the 1st third of the course) 25% of final grade
 2. 5-6 page paper (after the 2nd third of the course) 25% of final grade
 3. 12-15 page research paper (at the end of the course) 30% of final grade
- In addition to reading, writing and class participation (participation/attendance contributes 10% to final grade), students should expect to produce or participate in these additional graded learning activities:
 1. Planning the E.I.'s Holocaust Commemoration service
 2. Attendance at the E.I.'s Holocaust Commemoration service1 & 2 contribute 10% to final grade

Required Texts:

1. Van Harn, Roger E., Ed. *The Ten Commandments for Jewish, Christians and Others*. Eerdmann, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-8028-2965-8.
2. Coogan, Michael D. *The Ten Commandments: A Short History of an Ancient Text*. Yale University Press, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0300178715.
3. A study Bible (which may include options such as: Oxford Study Bible, HarperCollins Study Bible, the Catholic Study Bible, or the Jewish Study Bible).